

an even harder look at what each of us can do and must do to ensure that such tragedies do not happen again.

Although there are no simple solutions, recent evidence suggests we are moving in the right direction. According to the latest data, violent crime by young people has been cut nearly in half since 1993; schoolyard deaths have dropped dramatically. These are both important declines that reflect the lowest national crime rate in 25 years. But still, we have more to do.

At my direction, the White House Council on Youth Violence has developed a new website and toll-free information line to help parents and educators get the facts they need to reduce youth violence. The website address is www.safeyouth.org. And the toll-free number is 1-866-SAFE-YOUTH. That's www.safeyouth.org and 1-866-SAFE-YOUTH.

I'm also pleased to release another important resource, a guide for parents on communicating better with teenagers. It incorporates the latest research as well as the best ideas from the White House Conference on Teenagers, which Hillary and I sponsored last year. We'll distribute this publication nationwide through the website, the toll-free line, and with the assistance of school principals, school nurses, and pediatricians.

Like all parents, Hillary and I know it's not always easy to talk with your children about sensitive subjects. That's why this new guide is so very valuable, because it teaches parents how to listen more carefully to their children and nurture relationships built on trust, love, discipline, and respect.

America has made a lot of progress in renewing these enduring values and strengthening our sense of national community. A record number of young people now volunteer for community service. So together, we've built a country that's not only better off but a better, safer place for all of us.

We passed the Brady law, which has kept guns out of the hands of over 600,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers. We've secured funding for more than 100,000 new police officers on the beat. We created the COPS in schools program to help local law enforcement hire police officers to work in our schools.

We established after-school and summer school programs that are helping now 1.3 million children a year stay out of trouble and succeed in the classroom, and we've launched a national program to foster local partnerships that make our schools safer, identify children at risk, and get them the help they need.

Working closely with the private sector and community groups, we also expanded the GEAR UP initiative to give young people mentors and encouragement to seek a college education. And now a record number of young people are going on to college.

We need to build on this remarkable success. Here in Washington, Congress should now move swiftly to close the gun show loophole and require background checks for all gun buyers. In the private sector, Hollywood should own up to its responsibilities and stop marketing violence to America's young people.

There is nothing more precious to a parent than a child and nothing more important to our future than the safety of all our children. So let's do all we can to protect them from harm and teach them to walk away from violence. In the end, all of us have a responsibility to help our youth succeed and to help end youth violence. If we do this mission successfully, America will always be a great and peaceful Nation for generations to come.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 4:20 p.m. on January 12 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 13. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 12 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on Former President Ronald Reagan's Hip Surgery

January 14, 2001

Hillary and I are relieved that President Reagan's treatment for his injury appears to have been successful. Our thoughts and prayers are with the President, his wife, Nancy, and the entire Reagan family during this difficult period. We join all Americans in wishing him a speedy recovery.

Interview With Mark Knoller of CBS Radio in Dover, New Hampshire

January 11, 2001

No Gun Ri

Mr. Knoller. Mr. President, let me start by thanking you very much for granting this interview. I'm very grateful.

I wonder if we could start with a little bit of the news of the day. Today you issued a written statement expressing deep regret for the deaths at No Gun Ri. But the word "apologize" didn't appear in that statement. Is there a reason for that, that you drew a distinction between expressing regret and apologizing?

The President. Well, for me, now, other than that—I told them to try to draw the statement up based on what we actually knew about the facts. And I worked very closely with—or our people have—with the Government of South Korea. We want to be responsive to the people there. And I hope the statement will be taken well by the people of South Korea as a genuine expression of regret about what happened.

Lieutenant Commander Michael Speicher

Mr. Knoller. On another issue, there's a story now that a Navy pilot may have been shot down and may be held in Iraq. Do you have any information that leads you to believe that there are Americans held POW in Iraq?

The President. Well, I think the most I should say about this now is that in this particular case, and in this case only, I reviewed the evidence that we had, and we concluded that we should take him off the killed-in-action list and put him on the missing list, which means, obviously, that we have some information that leads us to believe that he might be alive. And we hope and pray that he is.

Mr. Knoller. What does the United States do about it?

The President. Well, now that we have some information, we'll begin—well, we've already begun working to try to determine whether, in fact, he's alive; if he is, where he is; and how we can get him out. Because, since he was a uniformed service person, he's clearly entitled to be released, and we're

going to do everything we can to get him out.

Mr. Knoller. If Iraq was holding an American, they couldn't use it as an issue with the United States unless they let us know they had somebody. Why would they hold somebody and not let us know about it? Would that be to their advantage?

The President. I wouldn't think so. That's why we did what we did on the classification. We have enough information that makes us believe that at least he survived his crash, at least that that's a possibility, and that he might be alive. And I thought, in fairness to his family and everyone else involved, based on a review of the information and the Defense Department's recommendation, we should change the status. But that's all we know, and I don't want to raise false hopes to either.

U.S.S. Cole

Mr. Knoller. Along the same lines, do we now know for certain that Usama bin Ladin was behind the attack on the U.S.S. *Cole*?

The President. I can't say that. I can—we do believe he was behind some other attacks on our people and that people affiliated with him have been involved in other attacks. But we're investigating this. We're still running down some of the leads. We're still doing some of the work. I think that we will know, and I think that the United States will take appropriate action.

And I believe this will be a completely nonpolitical issue. That is, I have absolutely no doubt that President-elect Bush will continue to pursue the investigation and, when the evidence is in, will take appropriate action. And when that happens, I will support him in doing so.

Attorney-General-Designate John Ashcroft

Mr. Knoller. And lastly, on a bit of domestic politics, do you think that Senators would have a good reason not to vote for John Ashcroft for Attorney General because he blocked your nomination of Ronnie White?

The President. Well, first, I think that it was a terrible mistake by the Senate to do it, to do it on a strict party-line vote, which required them to get some Republicans to